

A PRESIDENT'S MOTHER.

"GRANDMA" GARFIELD, WHO RECENTLY DIED AT MENTOR, O.

Her Life One of Vicissitudes, Hard Work and Privation—Its Crowned Happiness the Son's Election to the Presidency. Her Strong Mother Love—Last Days.



O, WHO could have the heart to hurt my boy?"

Such was the strong, bitter cry from the motherly heart of Eliza Ballou Garfield, on the fatal July day of 1881, when they told her the president was shot. To others he was the brave general, the eloquent congressman, the senator, the president of the greatest nation on earth; but to her he was still "my boy, my poor wounded boy," and so she moaned those words again and in her anguish. When told that his case was hopeless, she declared that she could not live without him; but the firm constitution does not yield so easily to grief, and the dauntless mother has outlived the murdered president over six years, dying at the advanced age of 86. An eminent French physician has said, "Great men are occasionally bad-tempered mothers; but there never was a truly great man who did not have a strong and vigorous mother." This is a little too sweeping, but it is a noticeable fact that the mothers of nearly all our eminent men have been women of marked bodily vigor, and that a large proportion of them have lived to see their progeny attain honor and success. The exceptions in American history will be seen in most cases to be those in which the mother yielded to the hardships of pioneer life and the distresses of a new country.

President Garfield's mother was a marked instance of the general rule, for at 70 she was as straight as a maiden in her teens, and eight years later, when she appeared at her son's inauguration, her still erect form showed but little of the infirmities of age. After the funeral she went to reside with the president's widow, and thereafter her decline was so regular that those who loved her best saw her oftenest could only note it from year to year. Early in 1887 her strength began to fail more rapidly, and early in 1888 she died almost without pain, simply from a weaning out of the vital functions.

Eliza Ballou was born Sept. 25, 1802, at the foot of Mount Mansfield, N. H., and was descended from one of the numerous Huguenot families that sought a refuge in the New World. Her parents followed the current westward, and in New York, on the 20 of February, 1811, she was married to Abram Garfield, then a small contractor on the Erie canal. The family history of the Garfields is a study in itself, a worthy study made from the fact that the family gave a president to the United States, for it has had the time and expense to become most thoroughly Americanized. Edward Garfield, an English Puritan, landed at Boston in 1639 and soon settled at Watertown, where his descendants remained for nearly two centuries. Abram Garfield, fifth in descent from Edward, took part in the battle of Concord, and his nephew, Abram, moved to Oneida county, N. Y., where, as before said, he married Eliza Ballou, neither being quite twenty years old at the time. A son and two daughters were born to them; then they followed the line of development westward to Guernsey county, O., where James Abram Garfield was born Nov. 19, 1833, and in which county he was buried.

We know more minute particulars probably of his early life than of any other American president; for the mother's memory was singularly vivid as to the events of those years, and she never wearied of recalling them. In the campaign of 1877 in Ohio, when there was a tacit understanding that Gen. Garfield was to be chosen United States senator if the Republicans secured the legislature,

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